DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 417 FL 018 495

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TITLE Mediating Skills in the Development of a Multilingual Society: Perspectives for Britain.
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 15p.; In: York Papers in Linguistics 13. Selected papers from the Sociolinguistics Symposium; see FL 018 472.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Pluralism; Foreign Countries; *Intercultural Communication; *Interpersonal Competence; Language Research; Linguistic Theory; *Multilingualism
IDENTIFIERS *Great Britain

ABSTRACT

The language behavior adaptations used by individuals and groups in a multilingual insider-outsider encounter to promote interaction are discussed. Forms of letting-in, asking-in, and withholding entry devices are examined in a variety of multilingual situations involving British and Ghanaian, West Indian, and Asian interlocutors. Letting-in and asking-in behaviors include the following: paralinguistic gestures; interjections; insertions in the text marked by a partial or complete break in coherence or cohesion; inserted repetition, paraphrase, or translation; language mixing; and pauses. Withholding entry is more difficult to identify, but includes manipulation of cohesive devices. Letting-in devices used by children in school situations are used as illustration. It is concluded that while letting-in devices may occur at any time and in any situation, careful tracking and use of these devices is essential in certain situations where there is reciprocity between participants, to facilitate development of cognitive skills in learners. (MSE)

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ED320417

Paper presented at the Sociolinguistics Symposium (7th, York, England, April 14-16, 1988).

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MEDIATING SKILLS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY : PERSPECTIVES FOR BRITAIN

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I. The presence in Britain since the turn of the century of growing numbers of linguistic minorities has led to an increased recognition among the general public of the multilingual nature of our society. It has not, however, led to the widespread development of the kinds of social behaviour in contact situations that result in a stable plurilingualism - the kinds of behaviour that obtain in traditionally plurilingual societies, where citizens are aware of the variety of languages spoken by their neighbours and are willing to adapt their behaviour to help learners to learn to become bilingual and to go about their daily concerns using the language. When such co-operative behaviour is absent, this is likely to be perceived by members of the linguistic minority as a kind of rejection, particularly when they have already experienced other, unambiguous forms of rejection. It thus exacerbates for them disadvantages which are, in other respects, shared with sections of the host community.

To explain this rejecting behaviour one has to go beyond linguistics and sociolinguistics to the historical, economic and political forces that underlie population movements and the circumstances of culture contact. The behaviour, and the problems to which it gives rise, can be described in sociolinguistic terms, and these disciplines can give partial explanations of individual instances. Remedy is beyond the scope of applied linguistics, reaching far beyond the educational domain. However, the educational domain is itself part of the society that it serves, and may be the scene of developments of sociolinguistic importance that arise and have their ultimate impact elsewhere in the wider society.

This paper is concerned with 'natural' language learning and development through interaction, and with the way that progress is held back when help is denied. It is part of a larger study concerned with language socialization and its contribution to cognitive development, and in particular with second language speakers' experiences of helpful behaviour and its relation to school achievement and social adjustment.

Helpful behaviour can, of course, take place between any interlocutors at any time when a need for help is felt - encouraging someone to speak, supplying a missing word or a necessary explanation - but it becomes important when the interlocutors belong to different groups, in such a way that the event represents an encounter between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' - the insiders having in common a way of living, sets of values and a way of speech that is to some extent unfamiliar to the outsiders: it is particularly important when the outsiders, children or immigrants, seek admittance as new members of the group, needing to learn to come to terms with the sets of values associated with that way of life, the meanings involved in the interactions of the insider group and the resources on which they draw in expressing these meanings.

York Papers in Linguistics 13 (1989) 329-342
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Typical of such outsider-insider encounters are those of the young child with teachers and older schoolmates in his first days at school; an adolescent in interacting with adults on first leaving school; a worker in a new job with new workmates. Thus defined it becomes apparent that the needs of first and second language speakers, and the means of meeting these needs, are very similar, and that similar factors condition their prospects when they move into a new language environment, of which one of the foremost is the presence of helpful people.

For people to be helpful, they must be able to sense what is needed and adapt their language behaviour. There are many ways of doing this, some to be discussed in III below, but not everybody has the experience to recognize needs or the goodwill to exert themselves, particularly where there is a clash between value systems and tension between social groups. Seen in such a perspective, it becomes apparent that success with language, whether it is a first or a second language, is to a considerable extent the outcome of interaction - a co-operative success - and failure likewise, a social failure.

Helpful behaviour in verbal interaction is referred to as 'letting-in'; the different manifestations of letting-in in discourse are referred to as 'letting-in devices' (Ure 1988). But where there is the possibility of help being given, there is also the possibility of help being denied. Where there is a need for help that is not fulfilled, this is referred to as an instance of 'withholding entry' or 'withholding support'.

II. Before going on to classify letting-in devices according to their functions it may be helpful to give examples. For English speaking readers it may be clearer if these examples concern not outsiders concerned with developing their skills in English, but rather, a native English speaker attempting to pick up the language of the country where she was working. The following comes from my own experience as a would-be learner of Akan in Ghana, and include both letting-in and withholding. The experience of withholding behaviour came first.

When I was in Ghana I could give little time to studying Akan and was generally, and rightly, considered by my Akan-speaking friends not to know the language. Once, in the common room, a group of my friends came in; I looked up but they passed me by and sat down quite near me talking Akan. They knew that I could not understand and sat turned away from me as they would not have done if they had been talking English. There was nothing in posture, gesture or eye contact to relate us as a group and I could not see their lip movements or expressions to help orient myself. I had wanted to try my limited skills in understanding, but the situation was hopeless; I came away discouraged. Some time later, in the common room again, a letting-in situation occurred. I was joined by two Akan speaking friends who knew I was learning. As we drank together they continued a conversation already under way, but used a variety of Akan extensively mixed with English (Forson 1979, 1968 ; Ure, 1973); we were facing one another round a small table. An important feature of this language mixing is the fact that cohesive relations extend between the two languages - so that items in translation relation can co-occur in a chain of reference. This kind of language mixing can provide one of the most efficacious devices for letting mature speakers in to a second language in a bilingual community. In the

present instance I did not follow the details of the conversation, which was in any case none of my business - the purchasing of supplies for the common room bar. But I did hear and understand, in a genuine context of use, every Akan word for food and drink that I had learned (and my understanding was confirmed by translation equivalents that occurred elsewhere in the mixed utterance). And I was not excluded. I was as much encouraged by this encounter as I had been discouraged by the previous one.

III. Letting-in and withholding entry are concepts relevant to some of the more important concerns of applied linguistics, to the conditions of language learning, educational achievement and social adjustment. They are introduced here tentatively; more research is needed, but for the conduct of that research we need a provisional metalanguage, in which the functions of letting-in are more clearly specified and recognition criteria, or possible realizations, are listed.

Setting aside for a moment the question of realizations, which poses a number of problems, it appears to be useful to classify letting-in devices on two dimensions. These two dimensions roughly parallel the interpersonal and experiential functions in the lexicogrammar (Halliday, 1977).

Collaboration, providing for ...	taking and ceding turns; giving encouragement, particularly to keep going in monologue; to express and take account of personal reactions, judgements and feelings.
Classification, providing for ...	awareness of the way language classifies experience; of the way partly synonymous utterances - paraphrases, translations, and quasi-echo responses, may imply different ways of classifying the same experience; awareness of metaphor, of incompatibilities, incongruities and ambiguities: range of potential meaning of items (Ellis, 1966).

Of the examples in the previous section, the first, in which the group of friends failed to respond to my initial signal was a case of withholding entry on the interpersonal dimension. The second exemplifies letting-in on both interpersonal and experiental dimensions.

There are occasions when the outsider or new speaker attempts to initiate a letting-in. The term proposed for this is 'asking in'; in the first example in the preceding section I had made a non-verbal asking-in signal by half turning and raising my head; it was this signal, not recognized as relevant, that justifies classifying this non-event as a withholding of entry.

The possible realizations of these devices, letting-in, asking-in and withholding entry, pose problems of two kinds. They are very miscellaneous, so that any descriptive statement would need to be highly complex and the linguistic and sociolinguistic environment plays an important part in recognition. Also, being in various ways superimposed

or inserted in a text that has other purposes, they are not easy to isolate, and difficult to quantify.

A discussion of realizations, with reference to the socialization of young children into English as mother tongue and as second language, is in Ure (1988), and some of the following examples are quoted from there: the reference given here is to the numbering of examples in that article. Otherwise the examples given here are mainly of interactions between bilinguals and in plurilingual groups, particularly in Ghana.

Realizations may be non-verbal, describable in terms of kinesics, as in the first example in II above (withholding entry): they may be paralinguistic gestures, etc., including laughter (Ure 1988:6) at incongruity in a child's utterance (classification): they may be interjections - "Gosh," a father's response to a child's story (Ure 1988:10), which appears to have both classification function (response to content) and collaboration (encouragement to continue). (For examples of non-verbal discourse acts see Sinclair and Coulthard (1975).)

They may be an insertion into the text, marked by a partial or complete break in cohesion and coherence. In 1 an old lady, who speaks only Akan, is discussing the possibility of getting a housegirl for a friend. The term Military Academy has to be explained to her.

1. Ɔye adwuma wɔ Military Academy (faako wokyerɛ asogyafo akrakyefo adeɛ ho no).
(S/He works at the Military Academy (where they teach the army officers their job)). (Forson 1968)

Here there is continuity on the interpersonal dimension - in the transmission of factual information but on the experiential dimension, that fact of the soldiers' studies is not really relevant to the negotiations for the girl's job, and will not get mentioned anywhere else in these negotiations (classification). In 6 below, where the children are discussing a geometry problem, they claim turns, for themselves or others, crying "Listen". This is non-cohesive with the rest of the text, a break on the interpersonal dimension in the flow of information, and on the experiential dimension - no reference to geometry (collaboration and classification).

There may be inserted repetition, paraphrase, or, in bilingual situations, translation into another language. This is quite common where another language, still imperfectly known, is used as the language of instruction. The following example is from a Ghanaian primary school, class 3, held basically in English, with translation and explanation in Akan (classification).

2. Teacher: ... that thread is made of a certain thing which is called cotton. Do you know "cotton"?

Pupils: Yes.

Teacher: Cotton is "asaaba". Wonyim asaaba a? [Do you know what "asaaba" is? An explanation in Akan follows]

The letting-in device may be realized by features that run all the way through the text: the raising of the voice to a deaf man is a simple example (collaboration). The language mixing reported in II above likewise

is a characteristic of the text as a whole, as in the following example, reporting a fatal accident on the road.

3. Student: Saa kwan no mmon de, every inch, misuro so. Misuro every inch of that road.

Friend: Yɛse two a-die at once. Baako wui on the spot, na baako nso, yɛse owuu Nkawkaw. (Forson 1968)

As this is the kind of text used for letting-in, I will not give a translation, but simply point out some of the translation equivalents in the text that make it so particularly effective: kwan = road; owuu = died numbers are not translated but 1 = baako, 2 = two; one important word is not translated - misuro = I fear, and it may not be known to an outsider that Nkawkaw is a town (classification).

Realizations of withholding entry are more difficult to identify, but there is the special case when one insider may warn the other to exclude a third party. When the outsider is a young child there is a tendency to use formal or figurative language, as in traditional sayings, or, where there is minimal bilingualism, to use a set warning in another language; 4b is a French phrase sometimes used in Great Britain.

4a. Little pitchers have long ears.

b. Pas devant les enfants.

In the case of adults, cohesive devices may be manipulated to withhold entry. Another personal anecdote goes back a number of years to a time when I found myself a member of a committee on which I was representing a minority viewpoint. Very regularly, when I had spoken, the leader of the other point of view would come in with "Yes, but ..." followed by an utterance that neither agreed as implied by the yes nor disagreed with what I had said, as implied by the but but simply did not cohere with it (withholding entry). Although I was ultimately proved right, this still rankles. On the other hand, and and but can be used to link consecutive utterances and establish a logical relation between turns, as in the case of the children in 6 below, and this can be strongly supportive. Such structuring is no longer a matter of letting-in, but an instance of the collaboration which is the ultimate aim of letting-in.

It is because of this great diversity of realizations that the term 'device' has been used rather than any attempt to locate letting-in directly in any type of structure.

One type of letting-in that can be quantified is the pause. Pauses are often used by the carers of very young children to encourage them to speak, joining in nursery rhymes and stories (Ure 1988:1-4), repeating items already familiar. In these cases the pause usually interrupts the grammatical structure, coming before the New element in information structure, memorable and phonologically prominent: the Given is the adult's part, the New the child's. This is primarily a collaboration pause, but the child at the same time becomes aware of information structure and of the sets of possible items that may occur at New. This kind of pause is used by the teacher in 5 below, and in assembling the possible answers offered by the pupils metal, steel, iron, tin, a lexical set is assembled (classification). Such pauses, interrupting structures in progress, are labelled arrest pauses (Sinclair 1966).

Pauses may also occur at the end of a completed structure. These are called release pauses. They have a rather different function, occurring frequently, for example in stories told by very young children, and often followed by mm or other signs of encouragement (Ure 1988:8-10). They seem to have a rather special kind of asking-in function - 'is it all right for me to go on?' - showing a diffidence that it is the task of the adult carer to dispel. The story tellers are still inexperienced in the solitary skills of the performers of monologue.

IV. In school letting-devices may sometimes be used by the teacher and asking-in by pupils in formal lesson periods. In the first example the teacher uses arrest pauses as in the following example:

5. Teacher: And now I've got this thing. What metal what material is this? ...

Pupil raises hand.

Teacher: Yes.

Pupil: Steel.

Teacher: No. It's not steel it's

Pupils: Metal.
Iron.

Teacher: It is metal, yes. Another name for it.

Pupils: Tin.
Iron.

Teacher: Tin, yes. It's metal and it's tin.

Pupils: 8 - 9 years.

This text, quoted from Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, is part of a lesson taught in a British school with a linguistically mixed intake having, in the early 70s, a population with 72% West Indian and Asian immigrant children. The teacher is supplying the Given and pausing to elicit the New in the same way as is used by the carers of infants.

In 6 a small group of children are working by themselves, following instructions from a tape recorder.

6. Recorder: Do you know what is happening to your shapes?

Aleem: Yes, I been notice what happened at first they go, first they go

Patsy: I noticed

Aleem: Listen!

Terry: First they go in a square

?: sh sh

Aleem: No, yeah they in a square the other one it goes in a oblong, then again it goes in a square

Fiona: Our one

Aleem: then it goes in a oblong again

Terry: Listen, listen, your one goes in a oblong and

& Fiona: our one goes in a triangle. Then your one goes in a square and our one goes in a triangle again. Your one will go in a oblong and our one will go in

All: a triangle

Children: 9 years

Here too children supply New in information structure, a triangle, in response to others' Given, our one will go in ... In one case a child, Terry, recapitulates the Given, first they go, before adding his contribution, the New, in a square. There are also collaboration devices: one child cries out "Listen" to gain attention for his New, while others quell interruptions with sh sh, to allow the next speaker to take his turn. This extract is as given in Wight (1977), who comments that these four children have spontaneously generated the two principles for the bisection of squares.

In examples 7 and 8 interruptions are accepted as an integral part of collaborative dialogue. This is an informal register of English, learned in part at least through practice in letting-in, through making linguistic predictions, completing structures, following through ideas: it is a register of exploration and discovery, as distinct from the registers where prepared opinions are put forward in debate, or where teachers' dictums are reproduced with as much completeness and consistency as the pupil can muster. In 7 half a dozen children are sitting round a table grappling with the problem of division - the question is how to share out three bars of chocolate between eight people. Each successive contribution to the discussion is either co-ordinated or subordinated to what went before, so that the whole discussion could be interpreted as a sequence of clauses belonging to a single sentence - one shared logical structure - co-produced by three girls and a boy.

7. Girl 1 (pointing to segments on bars of chocolate): It's like one eight there

Teacher: Yes.

Girl 1: and one eight there and one eight there like that

Teacher: Right.

Girl 2: and she said it's only one a person

Girl 3: but if you add those three eights together it'll be twenty-four and that's three each

Teacher: It's three each.

All: Yea, Yea, Yea.

Boy (pointing): because if you go down [i.e. the length of the bar] then there's one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,

Teacher: Yea

Boy: and then there's one, two, three ... [i.e. three bars altogether]

Children: 9 years.

This discussion took place in a primary school in Nottinghamshire, all the children being apparently first language English speakers. The text is

taken from a programme for the Open University entitled Learning Together; it was argued there that when children collaborate in solving problems they do better than when they work alone.

In these examples, the speakers have become confident collaborators. There will still be certain features of rhythm, intonation and gesture that regularly help to regulate their turntaking but the more marked letting-in devices that we have been discussing in the previous pages are no more needed.

8 is taken from Barnes and Todd's study, Communication and Learning in Small Groups. Here a small group of secondary school boys are discussing the problem: "What would happen to the spaceman if he stepped out into space without a space suit on?"

8. Barry: It's like a diving, diving suit, i'nt it?
Graham: Yeah ... it's full of air
Barry: It's only full of air so he can breathe
Graham: No it, it keeps, it stops the er
Alex: There's so much pressure when he gets down
Barry: Yeah
Graham: It stops, it stops it from pushing it in
Barry: I wonder how fish and all them survive down there then

Boys: 13 years

The boys' utterances are understood as a coherent discussion mainly because of the referential chain set up by the recurrences of it. However, as the authors point out, there is a shift of reference; they comment: "The gradual translation of the referent it from the space suit to the diving suit through a period of indeterminacy is here intended to illustrate similar processes which go on in all conversations ... The indeterminacy here enables the boys to try out a possible relationship between space suits and diving suits before moving on to another topic, and this is characteristic of how meaning develops during the flux of conversation" (Barnes and Todd 1977, pp.96 - 8).

9 is not problem centred, and, though it takes place in the school, it is fairly informal: the issue is a matter of lifestyle and personal relations, two school leavers talking informally with a postgraduate student working in the school. The school is Vauxhall Manor Comprehensive in London; at the time the recording was made at least twenty five distinct tongues (languages or dialects) were spoken by pupils, but after years of education and peer group experience mediated by English these bilingual young people will have become established second-language speakers with native-like skills in a rich bilingual register range (Vauxhall, 1982).

9. Dennis: ... You've been with your boyfriends for two years. Is that a long time or a short time?
H: Well, we beat everyone in our class
T: Yeh.
H: 'cause whenever they come in and they say they've had a boyfriend and the next day we see them or the next week

T: they've gone out with somebody else

H: and they've packed it all in but they don't mind doing that.

Girls: school leavers
(age not given)

Here, as in the 'chocolate' discussion, a single question was posed and in reply two girls, thinking along together, have produced an integrated logical structure - one single sentence.

In this conversation and also in the small group discussions above, there are no longer any outsiders. Letting-in occurs only as part of the joint effort required by specific problems. The speakers have been 'tracking' one another as the carer does with the small child (Halliday 1977, Ure 1988), but in this case it is reciprocal, developing one another's ideas and carrying forward one another's structures.

V. So far we have seen how letting-in by mature speakers leads to peer-group support and results in success in problem solving. Similar findings were reported in Ure (1988) as regards pupils' response to literary texts and in their critical awareness. Claims that withholding entry has negative results are harder to exemplify and instantiate. But, as regards literary skills, creative and critical, we argued that the development of literacy, with the accompanying isolation of the writer, was liable to be practised at the expense of oral skills and thus could have a disorienting effect. bringing to some pupils as much loss as gain. The example was quoted of a young story teller (Ure 1988:8) who lost her skills when she was required to write and read longer stories at school.

In bilingual societies something rather similar seems to happen on a larger scale. The next examples come from Ghana, where English is a second language for many, in that it has its own widespread functions in the community, especially as language of education. However, in rural areas particularly, in the first years at school it is experienced as a foreign language, with relatively little exposure to it and the only or main interaction in English is with one, dominant interlocutor - the teacher: language use without letting-in.

Here a small pilot study of pauses in the language of Ghanaian middle school children is suggestive (based on a corpus collected in Aburi by a student of the Department of Linguistics at Legon, Ghana). Matched texts were collected from four school subjects with different activities: story telling, reading and answering questions, a lecturette on practical skills, and problem solving. Pauses at arrest and at release were counted and then frequency calculated according to the total number of clauses in sentence structure in each text. In all instances the pupil spoke in monologue, or in answer to the teacher's questions.

The first thing to be noticed here was that, in the question and answer sessions, unlike the English examples from Sinclair and Coulthard (see 5), teachers and pupils all completed their sentences both in English and in Akan, thus excluding the possibility of the most fruitful of collaboration

devices - co-operation in the production of information structure. This is one of the common outcomes of teacher domination, resulting in pupil isolation and the production of a formal spoken style for which the model appeared to be written monologue rather than spoken dialogue.

The fact that the pupils did not perceive these questions and answers as being genuine interaction is shown by a certain lack of fit between some of the questions and the answers given in English.

10. Teacher: What was the sound which Heidi listened to so joyfully?

Pupil: Heidi stood behind the door and listened to the sound happily.

The answer had clearly been pre-prepared. However, if performance in other tasks is taken into account, this looks more like under-achievement due to nervousness - letting-in is confidence-building, isolation, the reverse - rather than a generally low standard.

However, in a genuine monologue, where pupils are asked to suggest their own answers to a problem story, pauses at arrest occur equally in both languages. The problem in this case is the old one of the ferryman with a dog, a fowl and some corn that have to be carried over the river. The problem seems to interest them and the pupils are not afraid to start talking in either language, working out their ideas as they go along; the break comes regularly before New information. The texts are marked with elements of clause structure, Subject (S), Predicator (P), Complement (C) and Adjunct (A); the relative length of pause is shown, approximately, by the number of carets.

11. A A A S P C
||| And | then | ^ ^ ((after | he | has taken | the corn |

S P A P C
and ^ ^ the dog)) he | will go || and | hide | the fowl ...|||

12. A S P_1 C P_2 A S P
|| na | me+ | +de ^^^ | aburo no | kɔ || na | m+ | a+bɛ+fa |

C P_2
^^ ɔkraman no | abã. |||

and I take (hold and go) the corn and I will bring (take and come) the dog.

Between Mother Tongue and Second Language there are differences in the frequency and distribution of pauses and as between arrest and release. In English, pauses are nearly three times as many as in Akan, both types occurring in nearly all texts. In Akan, pausing varies from one kind of language use to another, and seems to function as a register discriminator; arrest pauses are more common, release pauses very rare. Akan story telling is fluent with no pauses of any kind; release pausing occurs minimally in the lecturette, where the pupil temporarily assumes the teacher's role; it does not occur anywhere else. In contrast , in English both kinds of pause occur regularly: they are most frequent in the lecturette, but there are no release pauses: it seems that pupils do not take easily to a teacher's role in a second language. The only

situation in which pausing patterns seem nearly the same in both languages is in the reading aloud exercise, where neither set of pupils seems entirely at ease.

The findings reported here, though supported by other observations, are based on a very small analysed sample. More work needs to be done, but if it confirms these findings, then it will have important implications for education in a second language with its frequent concomitant underachievement, and for the development of bilingual skills.

VI. Monologue in the classroom, 'complete' utterances and the isolation of the learner from possible feedback and letting in, though occurring very widely, were described in the last chapter as being dysfunctional in the foreign/second language classroom. However, as a style such utterances have affinities with an area of language use that is important outside the classroom: that of formal debate and discussion. Its characteristics, of maximal coherence in following through a pre-determined argument, and carefully regulated allocation of turns, relate it to some of the main characteristics of traditional oratory, as well as pointing to some of the requirements of written registers. The skills may be being practised at the wrong time and in the wrong place - in the middle school - but they have a value that is recognized even by the pupils.

An example of this recognition comes from a Ghanaian schoolboy, commenting on the talk that took place in British schools: "They kept interrupting," he said "and did not seem clear in their ideas. Each one should think before he speaks, and all should have their turn." Similar findings are reported by Dorcas Orisanya of the University of Lagos. She tape-recorded discussions by two groups of students, one in Lagos, one in London, and found that one of the main differences lay precisely in the pattern of turntaking, the interruptions by the British, and the more patient courtesy of the Nigerians.

But in fact at this stage one needs to ask if the two groups of students are, in fact, doing the same thing. There are occasions where one needs to exchange ideas, and there are occasions where one needs to work out one's ideas, and for each purpose one interacts differently, and draws differently on the resources of language. There are two distinct registers (Ure, 1975), neither being fully effective without the other; both should be present in a mature person's register range; both should be provided for in education.

But in spite of the close functional relation between these two registers, they tend to get separated in people's minds - for instance much of the recent discussion of oracy in schools fails to make this distinction, partly because the domain of the traditional debating register tends to overlap with that of writing and the printed word. Also, where there is culture contact and bilingualism, it can happen that they get shared between the two languages of a bilingual individual's register range (Ellis 1984). And this is what seems to happen at a certain stage in Ghanaian schooling with the exploratory and interactive registers in the mother tongue, according to the findings of Professor Collison of the University of Cape Coast. Setting the same problems for discussion in different languages in elementary science classes in Ghanaian schools he found that three times as many hypotheses were generated where peer-groups discussed them in the mother tongue.

CONCLUSION

Letting-in devices, as we saw at the outset of this paper, can occur at any time, in any situation, irrespective of register or discourse structure. But, on the other hand, there are certain situations where careful tracking and use of the letting-in skills are essential - certain situations of problem posing and problem solving where there is reciprocity between the participants, where there is shared knowledge, shared objectives and an equality of status in respect of the business in hand. In such situations the linguistic features that we have called letting-in devices are necessary features, part of the register, including the kinds of shared structures that we have observed here. This is what we called "thinking along together" - one of the cognitive skills which, according to our initial hypothesis, are facilitated by letting-in.

In these situations all participants are talking about the same reality; it is because of this that they can use shared structures and draw upon the same experiential meanings. What they learn from one another is to see this reality in a new perspective. There are other types of situation where each participant has his own distinct reality to propound: this is so with narratives (as exemplified and discussed in Ure 1988) in which narrators present alternative realities removed from the here and now. These broaden the mind in a different way.

It was said of the mother tongue that knowledge of the world and knowledge of the language are gained together, but, as this argument has suggested, the same is true in varying extent of any language that is learned through interaction, and learned for living. To get the opportunity to learn, to develop, we must be available to one another as speakers, for we are one another's best resources.

This is coming to be recognized by teachers more and more. It has long been the guiding principle of small group discussion. In second language teaching it has its impact. For instance in an enthusiastic paper, Helen Wagner (1982) describes how, in a class joined by two non-speakers of English, the whole of the rest of the class banded together to help them to learn. Knowing, more even than the teacher, what the language needs were, they worked out a syllabus and a method, and created their own materials. But more than anything else, it would appear, they talked to them and gave them a welcome; they let them in to the life of the school.

It was said at the beginning of this paper that success in natural language learning is the outcome of good will - a co-operative success in which all concerned can claim some of the credit. It is sad that a project like Wagner's, in which good will appears to have been one of the outstanding characteristics, should need to be presented as so remarkable and so new.

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NOTE

This paper is part of an ongoing study of language learning, letting-in devices and cognitive development. The focus of the first paper (Ure, 1988) is on letting-in devices in the mother tongue and in informal second language learning; and a further paper discusses functions of family anecdotes of children's sayings and other oral mini-genres as part of traditional provision for developing the child's linguistic awareness and abilities (Ure forthcoming).

The preliminary research for this study was undertaken with support of a personal research grant from the E.S.R.C., which is gratefully acknowledged.

Earlier drafts of this paper were read by Ruqaiya Hasan and late Jeffrey Ellis; I am much indebted to both of these, and also to Lawrence Owusu-Ansah, for valuable comments.